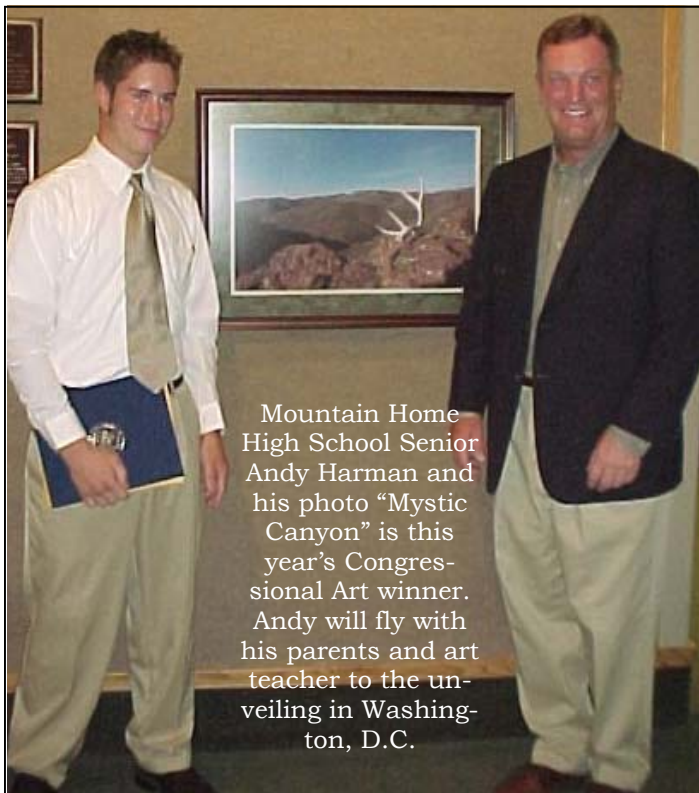




E-Newsletter www.house.gov/simpson June 3, 2003



Mountain Home High School Senior Andy Harman and his photo "Mystic Canyon" is this year's Congressional Art winner. Andy will fly with his parents and art teacher to the unveiling in Washington, D.C.

Representative Mike Simpson announced Mountain Home High School Senior Andy Hartman is the winner of the 22nd annual Congressional Art Contest. Simpson also announced Idaho Falls residents Evan Heath, Aja Frye, Erika Ellsworth, and Heather Nebeker, placed in the competition. All submitted art work will be on display at the Eagle Rock Art Gallery in Idaho Falls for the month of June. Hartman's photograph will hang in the US Capitol for one year. Thanks to Southwest Airlines, Hartman and his parents, and high school art teacher will fly free to Washington, D.C. to see the picture's unveiling.

What's Up this Week

For the week of June 2 to June 6, 2003

Tuesday

The House will vote on the H.J.Res. 4, the **Desecration of Flag Resolution**. The resolution states: "The Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States." The purpose of the proposed amendment is to give Congress the constitutional authority to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag.

Wednesday/Thursday

The House is scheduled to vote on H.R. 1119, the **Family Time Flexibility Act**. The bill gives working men and women more power and control over their lives by allowing them, through a voluntary agreement with their employer, to choose paid time off as compensation for working overtime hours. The flexible working arrangement, known as "family time," is designed to help working men and women achieve a greater balance between family and work obligations and spend more time with their families.

The House is also scheduled to vote on H.R. 760, the **Partial Birth Abortion Ban**. The bill prohibits physicians or any other individual from performing a partial birth abortion except to save the life of the mother.

Washington, DC,
1339 Longworth
Washington, D.C.
20515
Phone: 202-225-5531
Fax: 202-225-8216

Boise Office
802 West Bannock,
Suite 600
Boise, ID 83702
Phone: 208-334-1953
Fax: 208-334-9533

Idaho Falls Office
490 Memorial Drive,
Suite 103
Idaho Falls, ID 83402
Phone: 208-523-6701
Fax: 208-523-2384

Twin Falls Office
1201 Falls Ave. E.
Suite 25
Twin Falls, ID 83301
Phone: 208-734-7219
Fax: 208-734-7244

Pocatello Office
801 E. Sherman, Suite
194
Pocatello, ID 83201
Phone: 208-478-4160
Fax: 208-478-4162

Weekly Website

Celebrate 200 years of Lewis and Clark's exciting journey to the West. Learn more at:

<http://www.lewisandclark200.org/>

Federal Facts

The most popular pet names in America are: 1) Max, 2) Sam, 3) Lady, 4) Bear, 5) Smokey, 6) Shadow, 7) Kitty, 8) Molly, 9) Buddy, 10) Brandy.

Idaho History Quiz

What is the oldest four-year college in Idaho?

Answer this question correctly and you'll be featured in next week's e-newsletter!

Last week's question: Where did the name "Idaho" come from?

Answer: A steamboat that traveled the Columbia River which transported miners.

Quote of the Week

"Constant success shows us but one side of the world; adversity brings out the reverse of the picture."

— Colton

Simpson Continues Focus on Rural Medicare Reimbursement Rates

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson is thanking President George W. Bush for his commitment to increase Medicare reimbursements in rural areas.

The House Rural Health Care Coalition and the Congressional Rural Caucus, both of which Simpson is a member, sent a letter to President Bush thanking him and encouraging him to work with Congress to relieve the rural shortfall in Medicare reimbursements.

Simpson noted that urban hospitals are paid 1.6 percent higher than rural hospitals. "This translates into a real deficit for many doctors and hospitals in Idaho," Simpson said. "We have doctors turning away Medicare patients because they lose money treating them. Congress and the President need to step up and ensure that there isn't a disparity between urban and rural providers."

Simpson noted that both chambers in Congress are actively working on discrepancies in Medicare reimbursements. Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) sponsored and passed an amendment to H.R. 2, the Jobs and Growth Tax Act of 2003, to increase reimbursement rates. Unfortunately, the amendment was not included in the House/Senate conference report in H.R. 2.

"With the President's support and the overwhelming passage of Senator Grassley's amendment in the Senate, we have a good chance of getting our rural hospitals, doctors, home health agencies, and nursing homes some help in the upcoming Medicare reform bill," Simpson said. "I know from my 20 years of dentistry in Blackfoot that there is a great need for Medicare providers. In order to continue providing treatment for Medicare patients, we must ensure health care providers aren't punished just because they live in a rural area."

Simpson Votes for Healthy Forest Legislation

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Mike Simpson is hailing passage of bipartisan legislation creating healthier forests as good news for Idaho communities and public lands. The bill passed with a vote of 256 to 169.

Simpson, an original co-sponsor of H.R. 1904, said because of excessive litigation and analysis, forests are being exposed to excessive wildfires. For instance, federal foresters estimate that an astounding 190 million acres of land managed by the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Interior are at unnatural risk to catastrophic wildfire. Of that, over 70 million acres are at extreme risk to catastrophic wildfire. To improve forest health, the bill gives federal land managers, users and stewards the tools they need to respond to the crisis of overgrowth, insect infestation, and disease.

"In Idaho we know the devastating effects of wildfires. In 2000, more acres burned in Idaho than in any other state in the Union. These wildfires destroy critical habitat for wildlife, endangered species and homes," Simpson said. "While we can't control drought or lightening strikes that start fires, Congress can act to ensure forests are actively managed and fuels reduced."

The Healthy Forest Restoration Act streamlines bureaucratic procedures that stall legitimate management efforts, without restricting public participation. Forest management projects would still be subject to rigorous environmental analysis as well as administrative challenges and lawsuits, but the process would be completed in a matter of months rather than years, as is now the case.

Delegation Hails Mexican Bean Decision

Washington, DC - Idaho's Congressional Delegation commended the U.S. Trade Representative, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Republic of Mexico on the decision to resume exports of U.S. dry beans, including those from Idaho, to Mexico. The negotiated agreement came after Idaho's delegation joined those from other states in sending letters asking actions be taken to reopen Mexico to U.S. bean sales.

"Idaho's farmers can compete on a world market when the rules of free trade are fair. When the Mexican government haphazardly closed its border, Idaho bean farmers suffered terrible economic losses," Congressman Mike Simpson said. "I'm pleased the Bush Administration and the Mexican government were able to come to an agreement quickly before further economic damage occurred."

The decision to reopen bean trade with Mexico followed a meeting two weeks ago between staff and members of the Senate Agriculture Committee and a group of Mexican senators visiting Washington, DC. Idaho bean growers were hard hit by the loss of a major market in Mexico when that government closed the border, citing health reasons that Idaho growers said were not substantiated.